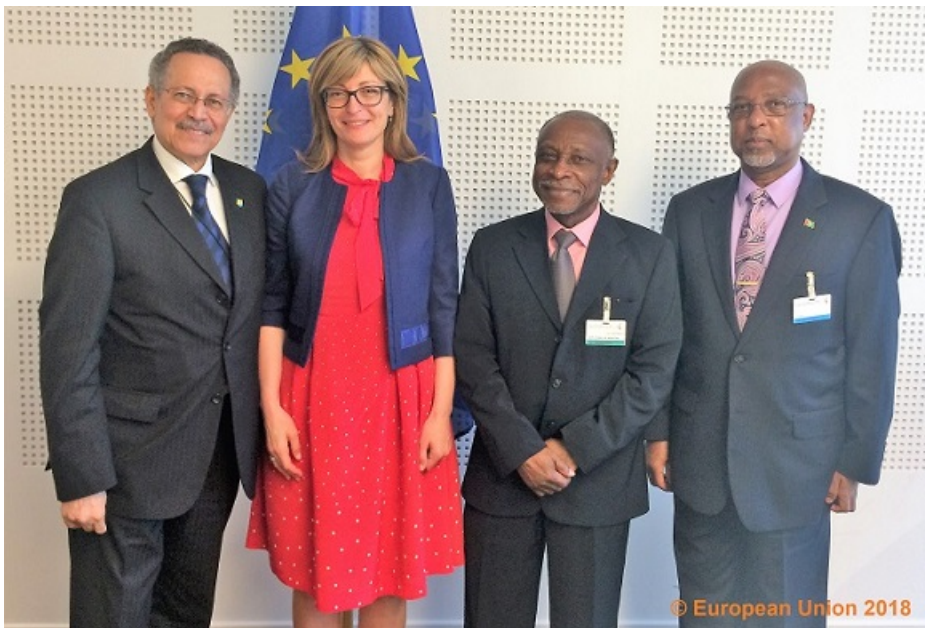


Statement by the Honourable Carl B. Greenidge, Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guyana, on behalf of president-in-office of the ACP Council of Ministers at the 35th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

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Brussels, 20 June 2018

Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly – Hon. Louis Michel, and Co-President, Hon. Joseph Hyacinthe Owona Kono, Hon. President-in-Office of the EU Council, Ekaterina Zaharieva, Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Members of the JPA, Distinguished guests



Thank you for the opportunity of addressing you on the occasion of the 35th Session of your Assembly.

Of all the Cotonou institutions, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly best exemplifies the spirit of equal partnership, and global solidarity in the fight against poverty and injustice, the quest for human dignity, decent lives, and in pursuit sustainable development for all.

I recognise that the main challenge we face is helping to further the values and objectives of the ACP-EU partnership at this critical moment in our shared history.

On behalf of the ACP Council of Ministers, I would like to commend this Assembly for the important work being done on the issues that affect not only ACP and EU countries, but the entire globe. With Members of the European Parliament facing elections in May 2019, I am well aware that this is the last Session of the Assembly may of the European Members will be attending.

I take this opportunity therefore to thank those Members for the diligent efforts in highlighting the development concerns of ACP States. We have not always agreed with your views, and neither have you with ours, but that is the nature of democratic politics. The important thing to realise is that we are all engaged in the same enterprise, to fight poverty and to improve the living conditions of our people.

I also extend best wishes for the future to those Members of the European Parliament who have decided not to seek re-

election. I wish you well in your future endeavours. To those contesting seats, you have our best wishes for success.

Co-Presidents,

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly will continue to be an important forum for the dialogue on development. It will also be a veritable sounding board for policy and agenda setting on North-South cooperation. It is in fact the only structured forum of its kind covering four global geographical spaces.

As the ACP and EU Member states contemplate the future of our partnership beyond 2020, the question before us is how to ensure that a new framework for cooperation is more effective, strategic, balanced and results-driven. How do we ensure it operates for the benefit of all.

At the same time, how are we able to safeguard and build on the valuable 'acquis' or accumulated rights, principles and rules, which have served us well under the Lomé and Cotonou Accords. The Accords include common objectives and principles, shared in a legally binding framework, as well as flexibility to adapt to international turmoil to meet the respective needs of our countries.

Against this background, both ACP and EU have been actively engaged in finalising their respective negotiating mandates in preparation for the exchange of memoranda. I am happy to inform you that at the 107th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers held in Lomé, Togo on 30th May 2018, the ACP Group adopted its negotiating mandate for a post-Cotonou Partnership Agreement with the European Union.

This adoption of the ACP Mandate is a strong manifestation of the unity and solidarity of the Governments and Peoples of the ACP States. Moreover, the adoption of the Negotiating Mandate has strengthened us in the endeavour to collectively ensure that the ACP-EU Post-Cotonou Agreement lives up to our expectations in achieving UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the achievement of which we have all given an unambiguous commitment. Fully aware of the magnitude of the task ahead, I am comforted by the fact that we can count on your support as key partners in the coming negotiations. Success in that endeavour will depend on courageous leadership, constructive dialogue and a collective approach.

I implore each of you to resolve to ensure that the Successor Agreement constitutes a legal basis for a renewed and strong partnership that will reaffirm commitment to democracy, peace and security, help to drive the transformation of ACP economies, driven by the determination to grow, innovate, industrialize, trade, and reinvigorate and add value to our products, with the ultimate goal of improving the standards of living of our peoples. Only in this way will ACP countries be able to rectify the imbalance with the EU as partners, and become less dependent on the development assistance of foreign nations.

Co-Presidents,

Let me stress the importance the ACP Group places on the need for people-based development. It is the search for this goal which led to the ACP Group to champion a new approach to Agricultural Value Chains Development. Agriculture continues to be critical to private sector development in ACP States, as it account for approximately 90% of total exports.

This new approach identifies areas where the ACP Group can make the greatest impact in the transformation of the agricultural sector. The ACP Council in Lomé finalised a framework programme that aims at addressing access to finance, capacity building, trade and investment, and climate related risks. This programme will articulate support to various sectors including bananas, cotton, sugar, cashew nuts, cocoa, kava, coffee, rum, fisheries and livestock.

Co Presidents

Critical to the economic and social development of the ACP Countries will be the ability to unlock, broaden and deepen the Impact of mineral resources on the population through the development of value chains. In this regard, the ACP group has developed an ACP Framework of action for the Development of the Mineral sector. This framework aims at fostering the development of mineral resources in support of the sustainable development of ACP countries. It will and contribute to poverty alleviation and social development in the mining sector.

Cognisant of the importance of beneficiation in attaining ACP integrated and sustainable economic development and growth, the post-2020 framework, will focus on scaling up industrial opportunities, notably through the creation of linkages and value-added activities in various sectors including extractive industries, and through support to manufacturing activities.

Co Presidents

On global governance, the ACP Group is in a unique position to bring its collective experience of over 42 years of trans-continental cooperation to bear. The combination of 79 ACP + 27/28 Member States has the distinct potential to play a decisive role in shaping global governance and decision making in international for a. We must therefore leverage our combined weight in an even more consistent and institutionalised manner than before, based on mutual interests and priorities.

We strive to carve out a place on the global scene at an opportune time in the quest for a new multilateralism. International relations are challenged by inadequate transparency, limited accountability and representation in the functioning and decision-making of multilateral organs.

Additionally, the tide of rising nationalist populism needs to be stemmed by the promotion of progressive multilateralism.

Co-Presidents,

As I conclude it will be remiss of me not to express my deepest appreciation to this august Assembly for the strong support expressed in favour of the maintenance of the unity of the ACP Group. In this regard I am reminded of the declaration adopted in March 2018 during your inter-sessional meeting which called for the preservation of the unity of the ACP Group. As recently as April at the 15th Regional Joint Parliament Assembly, the importance of the ACP and the EU negotiating as single and equal entities based on the principle of single undertaking was emphasised.

These bold declarations speak to the importance you attach to this partnership and the noble duty bestowed on you by your peoples. I commend your stand for unity of nations for the development of all.

As we look to the future of ACP-EU relations I am reminded of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King which I have found particularly relevant: He said:

“It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly.”

Our actions on this journey, Honorable Members, towards a new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, will indeed affect us one and all. Let us strengthen our resolve, as we prepare to clothe ourselves in this new “garment of destiny”.

Co-Presidents, Honorable Members, Distinguished guests,

I thank you for your kind attention.

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